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Ouachita's 23rd annual Festival of Christmas on Dec. 5-6 to highlight "Christmas Through the Ages"



By Chelsea Whelpley // Photos by Kristen Barnard Young

November 21, 2014

For more information, contact OBU's news bureau at newsbureau@obu.edu or (870) 245-5208.

ARKADELPHIA, Ark. -- Ouachita Baptist University's School of Fine Arts will present its 23rd annual production of A Festival of Christmas on Dec. 5 and 6 at 7:30 p.m. in Jones Performing Arts Center. Highlighting the theme of "Christmas Through the Ages," the production will feature Christmas music from the 1930s to present day. Tickets are \$12 each and may be purchased at www.obu.edu/boxoffice.

A Festival of Christmas began in 1992 with the opening of Jones Performing Arts Center as a way to give back to the community. The performance traditionally marks the beginning of the Christmas season for both the Ouachita and Arkadelphia communities.



This year Ace Collins, best selling author of *Stories Behind the Best Loved Songs of Christmas*, will serve as narrator to briefly describe the history behind some of the famous Christmas songs performed by Ouachita's ensembles.

"This is something new that I think the audience will appreciate," said Dr. Gary Gerber, musical director of A Festival of Christmas. Gerber also serves as chair of Ouachita's Division of Music, director of choral activities and professor of music.

"The show gives the best of both secular and sacred Christmas music," added Gerber. "It lets us enjoy the Christmas music that we as kids grew up singing during the holiday season, but it also reminds us of the true meaning of Christmas and how music is a powerful, emotional source of that meaning."

Five musical groups will perform during this year's production: Concert Choir and Ouachita Singers, both directed by Gerber; Women's Chorus and Ouachita Sounds, directed by Dr. Becky Morrison; and members of the OBU Wind Ensemble.

"This is my fourth year to participate in A Festival of Christmas and each year the music, choreography and overall effect continues to improve," said Ouachita Sounds and Concert Choir member Anna Moxley, a senior worship arts major from Bluefield, Va. "For me personally, A Festival of Christmas has transitioned from being simply a performance into a way to share the joy of Christ with others."

Highlighting the joy that is shared with the audience, Moxley added, "A Festival of Christmas brings both the Ouachita community and larger community together to celebrate the Christmas season. I think there is great significance in gathering together to honor the birth of our Savior."

Tickets are \$12 each and may be purchased at the Jones Performing Arts Center Box Office weekdays from 1-5 p.m. Tickets may also be purchased online at www.obu.edu/boxoffice. Students with a valid OBU ID may receive one free ticket. For more information, call the box office at (870) 245-5555 during business hours.